

Ancestral Shrine

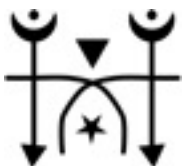
Establishing an Ancestral Shrine as soon you can after the passing of a loved one, or someone you would like to honor on your ancestral shrine is very helpful for the person passing over as well as a comfort for you. The Shrine itself consists of five basic components:

- 1) A white cloth,
- 2) A vessel containing clear water,
- 3) A light source,
- 4) A white stone,
- 5) A picture of the loved one.

Traditionally, the shrine is set up on the floor, near a water source (sink, tub or pipes that water flows through), however; this may not be practical for everyone, so find a place in your home where the shrine can be set up for three to nine days where you can visit it and where it will not be disturbed by partners, pets or people you might live with. As soon as you can after the passing of the loved one, put down a white cloth (cotton or wool work best as natural fibers will hold energy better). On the cloth you put the vessel of water, the light source, the white stone and a picture of the loved one. The vessel can be a bowl, cup or glass of clear water that you will change daily during the time that the shrine is set up. The light source is traditionally a candle that will burn continually for the three to nine days that the shrine is set up for, however, a night light or an electric “holiday” window candle will work just as well. The stone can be from a visit to the ocean or from the rock mulch border in your back yard, but should be relatively smooth and white. The picture should not have anyone except the person who has passed, and/or yourself in it. The shrine is for the dead, so be sure that there is no one living represented in the picture.

These are the basics. For those who want something more, you can decorate the shrine with flowers and mementos of the loved one; a favorite book or a piece of jewelry that the person wore, or a poem that you wrote for the deceased. For the three to nine days that the shrine is set up, you should visit with it daily. Replace the water daily and trim the candle wick so that the candle burns clean. Traditionally, you would prepare and bring to the shrine high energy foods and offerings during your daily visits. High energy offerings include coffee, candy, sweets, alcohol, honey, molasses and tobacco products like cigars and cigarettes. These are given to offer energy to the deceased loved one for their journey.

After the three to nine days, you would move the shrine into an Ancestor Altar. If you do not already have an Ancestor Altar, this may be used as the foundation of one. An Ancestor Altar would contain a vessel of fresh water that is changed regularly, a consistent light source, a covered bowl or vessel to hold the stones, and pictures of the people who have gone on before us who you wish to honor.



Blessed Be!
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